Explanatory Notes for the 2000-2001 Academic Performance Index (API) Growth Report

These *Explanatory Notes* are designed to assist educators and other interested parties in interpreting the *2000-2001 Academic Performance Index (API) Growth Report*. The *Explanatory Notes* provide details about calculating the Academic Performance Index (API) and API growth targets. The *Notes* also explain the criteria that were applied to determine whether or not schools met their growth targets and whether or not they were eligible for the school awards programs.

The Public Schools Accountability Act

The API is the centerpiece of the statewide accountability system in California public education. The Public Schools Accountability Act (PSAA) of 1999 (Chapter 3, Statutes of 1999, as amended by Chapter 695, Statutes of 2000), requires that the California Department of Education (CDE) annually calculate APIs for California public schools, including charter schools, and publish school rankings based on these APIs. The PSAA also requires the establishment of a minimum five-percent annual API growth target for each school as well as an overall statewide API performance target for all schools. A school that meets API growth targets may be eligible for awards under the following programs:

- The Governor's Performance Award Program
- The Certificated Staff Performance Incentive Act (Chapter 52, Statutes of 1999)

If a school fails to meet its annual growth target and its API score ranks in the bottom half state-wide, it will be identified for the Immediate Intervention / Underperforming Schools Program (II/USP).

On November 9, 1999, the State Board of Education (SBE):

- approved a methodology for calculating the 1999 API on a scale of 200 to 1000
- defined the five-percent annual API growth target
- established an interim statewide API performance target of 800

These actions cleared the way for the publication of the *1999 API Base Report*. This report, which was released in January 2000, included each school's 1999 Base API, its statewide API rank by type of school (elementary, middle, and high), and API rank when compared to schools with similar background characteristics, as defined by the PSAA, and APIs for each numerically significant ethnic and socioeconomically disadvantaged subgroup. It also set API growth targets for each school for the upcoming year.

The *1999-2000 API Growth Report* was released in October 2000. It reported whether or not each school had met its 1999-2000 growth targets and whether or not the school was awards eligible.

Base and Growth Reports

Each annual API reporting cycle includes two reports: a base report, which appears after the first of the calendar year, and a growth report, which appears after school starts in the fall. This pair of reports is based on APIs calculated in exactly the same fashion with the same indicators but using test results from two different years.

Eventually, the API will incorporate a number of different indicators; however, since 1999 to the present the API has consisted solely of results from the Stanford 9 norm-referenced assessment that is administered in conjunction with the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program. In January 2002 the API will be expanded to include some results from the California Standards Tests. Other required indicators will be added as they become available in the future.

Students Included in the API

The term "valid Stanford 9 test scores" as it appears in various API reports is synonymous with the number of students with Stanford 9 test results contributing to a school's API. In determining which test results should be included in the API, the CDE employed the same pupil exclusion rules used in calculating school-level STAR results that appear on the Internet at *<star.cde.ca.gov>*.

1. A pupil record was excluded if the Stanford 9 test administration accommodation for the pupil was more than one grade out of level (e.g., a sixth grader tested lower than 5th grade or higher than 7th grade).

2. A pupil record was excluded if any of the following seven test administration accommodations were marked "yes" for all Stanford 9 content areas:
   a. Braille
   b. Timing/Scheduling
   c. Presentation
   d. Response
   e. Test read aloud
   f. Directions translated
   g. Bilingual dictionary

3. A particular content area of a record was excluded if the percentile rank for that content area was not between 1 and 99.

4. A particular content area of a pupil record was excluded if the test administration accommodation for that content area was marked "yes" for any of the seven reasons under #2 above.

In addition, to comply with provisions of the PSAA regarding student mobility, a record is excluded if the pupil first attended the district in the current year as indicated on the STAR answer document. An exception is made for a student new to a district who has followed a normal matriculation pattern.

Core Elements in API Growth Reports

Certain core elements appear throughout the 2000-2001 API Growth Reports. They include:

- STAR 2001 Percent Tested
- 2001 API (Growth)
- 2000 API (Base)
- 2000-2001 Growth Target
- 2000-2001 Growth
- Met Growth Target
- Awards Eligible

STAR 2001 Percent Tested

This percentage is calculated by dividing the number of students tested by the nonexempt enrollment. The nonexempt enrollment is defined as the number of students enrolled in the first day of testing in the grades 2-11 minus the number of

students in those grades exempted from standardized testing due to Individualized Education Program statement, minus the number of students in those grades exempted from testing due to parent/guardian written request. The number is rounded down to the nearest whole number (e.g., 94.9=94) The STAR 2001 Apportionment Information Report is the source of these data.

2001 API (Growth)

The 2001 API (Growth) summarizes a school's performance on the 2001 Stanford 9. It is calculated in exactly the same fashion as the 2000 API (Base).

2000 API (Base)

The 2000 API (Base) summarizes a school's performance on the 2000 Stanford 9. It was released in January 2001. The API is on a scale of 200 to 1000. It is based on the performance of individual pupils on Stanford 9 content area tests as measured through national percentile rankings (NPRs). In some instances, APIs are also calculated for student subgroups at a school in order to ascertain whether the school meets the "comparable improvement" criterion (see page 5). For details on the calculation of the 2000 Base API, please consult the document titled *Calculating the Academic Performance Index (January 2001)*, which is accessible through the PSAA web site at *<www.cde.ca.gov/psaa/api>*. (See *News, Documents and Law, Reporting Cycle: 2000-2001*.)

The structure of the test varies between two grade configuration segments: grades 2-8 and grades 9-11. For schools with grades in both segments, an API was calculated for each segment. The two APIs were averaged by weighting each segment API by the number of pupils with valid scores. For example, for a K-12 school, the API was the weighted average of the APIs for grades 2-8 and grades 9-11.

For a small number of schools with invalid 2000 Base APIs, the API listed is actually the 1999 Base API. In this instance, the API is footnoted appropriately.

2000-2001 Growth Target

A school's 2000-2001 growth target was calculated by taking five percent of the distance between a school's 2000 Base API and the interim statewide performance target of 800. For a small number of schools with invalid 2000 Base APIs, the number listed under the 2000-2001 Growth Target is really a 1999-2001 Growth Target, which is double the 1999-2000 Growth Target. For any school with a 2000 API of 781 to 799, the annual growth target is one point. The growth target for any school with a base API of 800 or more is not listed as these schools need only to maintain an API of at least 800.

2000-2001 Growth

A school's 2000-2001 growth is calculated by subtracting the school's 2000 API (Base) from its 2001 API (Growth).

Met Growth Target

A school met its 2000-2001 growth target if:

- it met its school-wide growth target, **and**
- all numerically significant ethnic and socioeconomically disadvantaged subgroups at the school demonstrated comparable improvement.

Schools met the comparable improvement target if all numerically significant ethnic/racial and socioeconomically disadvantaged subgroups met their API subgroup targets, which in most cases is 80 percent of the school-wide 2000-2001 API growth target. For a full discussion, see the section on "Subgroups," beginning on page 5.

Awards Eligible

Schools that met the following criteria may be eligible for the Governor's Performance Awards (GPA) Program:

- the schools met both the school-wide API growth target and comparable improvement targets

- the schools demonstrated a minimum growth of five points (this requirement is effective October 2001)

- all numerically significant ethnic and socioeconomically disadvantaged subgroups at the schools demonstrated a minimum growth of four points (this requirement is effective October 2001)

- elementary and middle schools had at least 95 percent participation rates in the 2001 Stanford 9; high schools had at least 90 percent participation rates in the 2001 Stanford 9

Structure of the Report

The *2000-2001 API Growth Report* is composed of three parts:

1. *County List of Schools*
2. *District List of Schools*
3. *School Report*

Lists of Schools

These lists include all schools in a county or a district for which the CDE has calculated a 2001 API (Growth). In the county list, the schools are presented alphabetically by district and by type (elementary, middle, high, and small); in the district list, the schools are presented alphabetically by type.

Only schools included in the 2000 Base API Report appear on the lists of schools. New schools that tested for the first time in 2001 will appear on the 2001 Base API Report, which will be released in January 2002.

Schools with nontraditional grade configurations, e.g., 7-12, have been placed into the school type according to standard criteria established by the California Department of Education. These criteria are available through: *<www.cde.ca.gov/psaa/api>*.

Schools on the Lists without APIs

A sizeable number of schools on the lists do not have APIs because they are participating in the Alternative Schools Accountability Model, which is presently under development. These include:

- Schools with fewer than 11 pupils with valid test scores in either 2000 or 2001

- Alternative schools serving nontraditional student populations

Other schools have had their 2001 growth APIs invalidated. Under regulations adopted by the SBE, this may occur for several reasons:

- adult testing irregularities have occurred at the school

- the API is not representative of the total pupil population at the school

- the school has experienced a significant demographic change in pupil population

- the rate of students who have been excused from STAR testing by parent request is equal to or greater than 10 percent (schools with rates between 10 percent and 20 percent will later be reevaluated through standard statistical tests to check the representativeness of the tested population)

- the school failed to test a significant proportion of its students in all content areas

Finally, some districts are correcting STAR demographic data with a resulting impact on

school-wide or subgroup APIs. The APIs for the affected schools will be reported in December 2001, after corrected data are received from the test publisher.

School Report

A *School Report* is generated for each school on the *List of Schools*. In addition to the common core elements, the *School Report* includes:

- data on subgroups

- school demographic characteristics

Subgroups

The law defines a "numerically significant ethnic or socioeconomically disadvantaged subgroup" as a subgroup "that constitutes at least 15 percent of a school's total pupil population and consists of at least 30 pupils." Also, an ethnic or socioeconomically disadvantaged subgroup of 100 pupils constitutes a numerically significant subgroup even if the subgroup does not constitute 15 percent of the school population. **These numerical criteria (15 percent and 30 pupils, or 100 pupils) will be computed on the basis of the number of pupils with valid Stanford 9 scores for that subgroup.**

The school is responsible for demonstrating comparable improvement only for those subgroups that are numerically significant in both 2000 and 2001. Ethnic/racial subgroups include the following:

- African American not Hispanic

- American Indian or Alaska Native

- Asian/Asian American

- Filipino/Filipino American

- Hispanic /Latino

- Pacific Islander

- White (not of Hispanic origin)

According to the definition adopted by the SBE, the "socioeconomically disadvantaged subgroup" consists of pupils who meet either one of two criteria:

1) Neither of the pupil's parents has received a high school diploma

OR

2) The pupil participates in the free or reduced price lunch program.

A pupil who is a member of the socioeconomically disadvantaged subgroup is also a member of one of the racial/ethnic subgroups. Therefore, the total percentage of students in all numerically significant subgroups at a school may exceed 100.

To determine whether or not a numerically significant subgroup demonstrated comparable improvement, it is necessary to compute the 2000 API (Base) and the 2001 API (Growth) for each subgroup. Under the definition adopted by the State Board of Education, "comparable improvement" requires that each numerically significant subgroup must meet or exceed 80 percent of the 2000-2001 school-wide growth target. The 2000-2001 subgroup target was calculated by first multiplying the school-wide target by .8 and then rounding the product to the nearest whole number.

There were four minor exceptions to this rule:

1. For subgroups within schools with school-wide APIs between 781 and 799, i.e., approaching the statewide interim performance target of 800, the annual growth target was one point.

2. Regardless of the school-wide API, subgroups already at or above 800 had to

continue to meet the statewide interim performance target of 800.

3. In schools with 2000 APIs of 800 or more, subgroups with an API of less than 800 had to make growth of at least one point.

4. In instances where 80 percent of the school-wide target results in a subgroup target that would exceed the distance from the subgroup API to 800, the subgroup target equalled the distance to 800.

Growth Targets and Award Eligibility

It is possible for a school to meet its school-wide and subgroup targets but fail to qualify for the GPA. **As noted on page 3, a school must demonstrate a minimum of five points growth and all numerically significant subgroups at the school must demonstrate a minimum of four points' growth in order for the school to qualify for the GPA.**

School Demographic Characteristics

Along with subgroup data, the *School Report* includes the demographic characteristics on which the school characteristics index for the upcoming 2001 Base API school rankings will be based. The data from which the percentages and rates are derived come from two sources:

1. October 2000 CBEDS data collection (information on teacher credentials, multi-track year round participation, and class size)

2. 2001 STAR student answer documents (information on ethnic/racial distribution, parent education level, participation in free or reduced price lunch program, school mobility, matriculation, English learners)

Regarding information taken from CBEDS:

* It is possible for one teacher to be in both the fully-credentialed and emergency-credential categories (e.g., a teacher holds a single subject emergency credential); therefore, the total of the percentages for "Fully credentialed teachers" and "Teachers with emergency credentials" may exceed 100.

* Average class sizes were derived from the enrollment data reported on the Professional Assignment Information Form (PAIF).

* "Core academic courses in departmentalized programs" reflects average class size in the following subject areas: English, Foreign Languages, Math, Science, and Social Science.

Regarding background characteristics derived from the STAR answer document:

* School mobility is the percentage of students who first attended the school in the current year. Students enrolled in the lowest grade at a school are excluded from this calculation. School mobility is used as a background characteristic only. The criterion for excluding a score from the API calculation is **district** mobility, i.e., any student who began continuous enrollment in the district during the year tested.

The School Demographic Characteristics that appear on this report encompass students in the grades tested, i.e., 2-11. The characteristics will be used in the formation of the new similar schools comparison groups for the 2001 API (Base) Report.

Contacts

If you have further questions about the API, growth targets, or numerically significant subgroups, please contact the Educational Planning and Information Center via e-mail at *<epic@cde.ca.gov>* or by phone at (916) 657-2273.